

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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SUBJ: CHANGES IN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM

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1. FOLLOWING ARE RESPONSES REQUESTED REFTEL (A) ON IMPACT
OF CHANGES IN COSTING OF MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS.

2. AS AMBASSADOR HAS INDICATED IN REFTEL (B) WE CONSIDER
ADVERSE IMPACT OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN COSTING OF MILITARY
TRAINING TO BE SERIOUS FOR NEPAL, SINCE IT WOULD EFFECTIVELY
MEAN A REDUCTION BY AT LEAST 50 PERCENT OF THE CURRENT MODEST
TRAINING PROGRAM WE NOW OFFER NEPALESE MILITARY. CUT OF
THIS MAGNITUDE WILL PROBABLY BE INTERPRETED BY COUNTRY'S
MILITARY LEADERS AS INDICATING DIMINISHING US INTEREST IN
MAINTAINING GOOD RAPPORT WITH NEPAL'S MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.
REACTION OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, WHILE LESS SERIOUS, MAY
ALSO REFLECT CONCERN THAT US INTEREST IN COUNTRY MAY BE
FLAGGING.

3. TRAINING COURSES OF GREATEST INTEREST TO ROYAL
NEPALESE ARMY (RNA) ARE (IN ORDER OF PRIORITY) STAFF
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COLLEGE, TECHNICAL RADIO AND AUTO REPAIR COURSE,

AND JUNIOR OFFICER COMBAT COURSES SUCH AS RANGER, ADVANCED INFANTRY AND SPECIAL FORCES. NEPAL IS NOT CURRENTLY PAYING FOR US TRAINING, NOR IS IT LIKELY THAT IT COULD DO SO IN THE FUTURE. IN EVENT THAT US PROGRAM IS REDUCED, RNA WILL PROBABLY SEEK TO MEET GAP THROUGH INCREASED TRAINING IN INDIA FOR WHICH SOFT CURRENCY RUPEES COULD BE USED. ALMOST ALL FOREIGN TRAINING, BE IT CIVIL OR MILITARY, IS PROVIDED TO NEPAL THROUGH FOREIGN GRANT ASSISTANCE.

4. MISSION BELIEVES THAT STAFF COLLEGE AND JUNIOR OFFICER COMBAT AND LEADERSHIP COURSES ARE OF GREATEST BENEFIT TO US INTERESTS, SINCE RNA PARTICIPANTS CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO RISE TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN ARMY. RADIO AND TECHNICAL AUTO REPAIR COURSE, IRONICALLY, ARE GOOD ENOUGH SO THAT NEPALESE GRADUATES HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN REPAIRING PRC RADIO EQUIPMENT AND SOVIET VEHICLES WHICH ARE NOW IN ARMY INVENTORY, IN ADDITION TO OLDER US EQUIPMENT. AS STATED ABOVE, ALL US TRAINING IS PROVIDED UNDER GRANT ASSISTANCE AT CURRENT LEVELS OF \$35,000 PER YEAR, WHICH WE CONSIDER MINIMUM PROGRAM BY AND STANDARDS. AS INDICATED IN REFTEL (B) DOUBLING OF COST WILL MEAN THAT NUMBER OF RNA STUDENTS TRAINED ANNUALLY IN US WILL BE REDUCED FROM SEVEN TO THREE OR FOUR.

5. RNA HAS INFORMED MISSION THAT IT HAS DECIDED TO ABANDON AUTO REPAIR, INFANTRY, SPECIAL FORCES, CIVIL AFFAIRS, ENGINEER AND SIGNAL OFFICER COURSES.

6. RNA WILL PROBABLY LOOK TO INDIA TO FILL GAP CAUSED BY INCREASED COSTS OF US TRAINING. HOWEVER TRAINING IN USSR OR PRC COULD NOT BE ENTIRELY RULED OUT, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OF COURSE STRONG RESTRAINTS OPERATING AGAINST SUCH DECISIONS BY THE GON. IF US TRAINING IS REPLACED BY FOREIGN TRAINING, IT IS DOUBTFUL IT WOULD HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON ALREADY MARGINAL MILITARY COMPETENCE OF RNA, BUT INTEREST IN US MILITARY MATERIEL AND DOCTRINE WOULD CONTINUE TO DECLINE.

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7. THE ARMY IN NEPAL, AS IN ANY DEVELOPING COUNTRY, HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN POLITICAL CHANGE. US HAS NOT PROVIDED MATERIEL, EXCEPT IN EXTREMELY LIMITED ITEMS, SINCE 1968 AND THE TRAINING PROGRAM REMAINS AS THE ONLY US MILITARY ASSISTANCE NOW PROVIDED NEPAL. THE MODEST US TRAINING PROGRAM THUS PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH PRESENT AND FUTURE MILITARY LEADERS. A DECISION TO ELIMINATE THIS PROGRAM WOULD ALL BUT CLOSE

THIS CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION SINCE THE MILITARY, BY AND
LARGE, REMAINS INACCESSIBLE TO FOREIGNERS. TO DATE THE
RNA HAS CAREFULLY SELECTED ITS CANDIDATES FOR
TRAINING IN THE US, AND WE CAN REASONABLY EXPECT
THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL, WILL RISE TO IMPORTANT POSITIONS
OF COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP. CARGO

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